Delay in construction of Bangalore International Airport

2605 SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the delay in execution of Bangalore International Airport project has caused immense problems and hardship to the farmers, whose land is to be acquired for the purpose, and whose fate is hanging in balance with no permission to develop their land or drilling a borewell for irrigation, nor any compensation for over five years; and

(b) if so, the reasons for delay and continuing uncertainty?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) On 1.2.2000, the Government of India has accorded 'in principal approval' for setting up of a new airport at Devanahalli in Bangalore in the joint sector.

Construction of second Airport near Mumbai

2606. SHRI SATISH CHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether any decision has been taken by the review committee regarding second airport near Mumbai;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the action plan worked out by the Government for timely completion of this project?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) The Committee is likely to submit its report to Ministry of Civil Aviation by end of April, 2000.

Sacking of staff in IA

2607. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Hindu dated the 2nd March, 2000 captioned "IA gives the sack to 800 staff in one go"; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item relates to 823 employees who superannuated on 29th February, 2000 as a result of the decision to roll back the age of superannuation of Indian Airlines employees from 60 to 58 years. This was in keeping with the policy of minimising manpower as initiated by the Company in 1992, and necessary for improving the Company's financial health. The decision has not affected the Company adversely since adequate trained manpower is available and limited recruitment is being done only in operational categories when essential.

Blocking of seats by travel agents in AI'S Flights

2608. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) Whether it is a fact that Air India's authorised travel agents have been "Blocking Seats" on many flights several months in advance by enlisting fictitious names;

(b) Whether it is also a fact that even Al flights show fully booked, eventually go with many seats vacant which results in a loss of revenue to the airlines; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) :

(a). and (b) The phenomenon of block bookings, especially during the peak seasons, has come to light. Bookings are required to be back up with purchase of tickets in a specified time frame. This is regularly monitored.

(c) Following additional measures have been taken with regard to reservation management :—

(i) A special Monitoring Unit has been set up to scan flights especially during the peak period and weed out block bookings.

(ii) Similar activities are being carried out by Air India field stations.

(iii) More emphasis has been laid on strict pre and post flight checks by stations to ensure that all passengers are ticketed and multiple bookings and onward/return reservations of 'no show' passengers are cancelled.

(iv) A new software Automatic Revenue Management System is being installed.